

Charter Vessel Licenses

2010-2011

This document should be kept on board all charter vessels as a legal reference, not to supersede knowledge of the pertinent laws.

Definitions:

“Charter Fishing Vessel” means a vessel used to transport recreational saltwater fishermen for hire and includes charter, party and head boats. **[Section 50-5-15 (10)]**

For the privilege of operating a charter fishing vessel in the salt waters of this State, the owner or operator must purchase an annual charter vessel license for each vessel for the following fee to:

- (1) Carry six or fewer passengers, \$150
- (2) Carry seven to 49 passengers, \$250
- (3) Carry 50 or more passengers, \$350

[Section 50-9-560 (C)]

Charter fishing vessels shall maintain a log of the number of persons carried each trip, number of hours engaged in fishing, number of fish by species caught each day, and other information considered necessary by the Department. The logs must be submitted to the Department monthly by the tenth day of the following month.

A person licensed to operate a charter fishing vessel who fails to maintain or submit a log as required is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, must be fined not less than twenty-five dollars nor more than five hundred dollars, or imprisoned for not more than thirty days, and a subsequent charter fishing vessel license must not be issued until the requirements of this subsection are met. **[Section 50-5-1915 (A)]**

Federal law requires that any operator of a for-hire vessel must have a valid U.S. Coast Guard issued Captain's License (appropriate for the specific number of passengers/tonnage).

Charter Vessel Logs

South Carolina Department of Natural Resources Reporting Requirements:

1) All permitted charter vessels must submit daily trip reports to the Marine Resources Division's Fisheries Statistics Program, P.O. Box 12559, Charleston, SC 29422-2559 on a MONTHLY basis for all trips taken during the month.

2) Reports must be received by the 10th of the following month regardless of whether or not fish were caught. If no trips were made during the month, a single report must be submitted with “No Business For The Month Of (month)” printed on the middle of a report form.

3) Reports should be complete and accurate. This data is utilized by the Department for compiling federally mandated fishery compliance reports and serves as a data source used in the management of the State's marine resources.

4) Charterboat logbooks (with more detailed instructions) can be picked up from Room 215 in the Administrative Building at the Marine Resources Center on James Island, or can be mailed to permit holders.

[Section 50-5-1915]

Charter Vessel Permits

State licensed charter vessels who fish for federally managed species in the EEZ must obtain the appropriate permit for the fishery or fisheries in which they are engaged.

For HMS and Tuna charter/headboat permits contact NMFS Permit shop at 1-(888)872-8862 or www.hmspermits.gov.

For Dolphin Wahoo, Snapper Grouper, or Coastal Migratory Pelagics charter/headboat permits contact NMFS Southeast Regional Permit Office at (727)824-5326 or <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/>.